



From the Desk of Assemblyman Mike Morrell:

### Legislative Forecast 2013

I love California and greatly appreciate all of the opportunities it has afforded me. My 35+ years of success in business might have been possible elsewhere, but it happened here where I met my wife, raised my family and developed a network of great friends and partnerships. The land and its beauty is attractive which has made it an easy selling point for my business. However, I would not be telling the whole truth if I neglected to mention that increased regulation and inconsistency has made doing business, more difficult as time has passed and I don't believe that I am alone in this struggle.

I am grateful for the opportunity to represent our community in the State Assembly and when I return to work with my colleagues next year I look forward to learning all of the new faces and working with all of the returning lawmakers. We will face many challenges moving forward and I am hopeful they will allow us to rise to the occasion as there is much work to be done.

First, last year's legislature passed a "fee" without bipartisan consent. This \$150 annual fee, which I believe to be unconstitutional, assesses a charge

to all rural property owners for “fire prevention”. Most property owners were not informed of this new assessment that includes a retroactive charge for past fire protection. This hide and seek game begs the question: What exactly have residents been paying public safety taxes for? If we allow the government to assess this unconstitutional tax, we set a precedent for all of our freedoms and liberties to inevitably be at risk.

Next, in the most recent election the Governor championed Proposition 30 as a make or break opportunity for education, and to his credit it passed. So now, will it deliver what it promised? A lot will depend on whether it raises the assumed revenue. Judging from the Governor’s past budgets, unfortunately that is not guaranteed. In addition, the common wisdom is that only a small portion of the revenues will go to education but the majority is headed to the general fund to backfill other budgetary concerns. This is not what was promised for the passing of Prop 30.

Lastly, Assemblyman Tom Ammiano recently announced his intentions to dismantle a portion of Proposition 13. This measure was passed by a vote of the people to protect private property ownership. His changes propose an uninhibited tax increase on commercial property. I suspect that a case will be made for our own private homes to come next. The People of California have done everything possible to protect Proposition 13, and the Legislature has relentlessly pursued its demise. This appears to be a divide and conquer strategy to remove all obstacles from Sacramento’s ability to raise taxes as they deem necessary. Now with a supermajority in the state legislature both the political will and ability are there.

After all, voters entrusted the Governor with Proposition 30, making California the highest taxed state in the Nation. Still there is talk of raising taxes elsewhere and absolutely no conversation about responsible management of Government spending. This same irresponsibility caused the budget deficit to begin with. It stands to reason that dividing portions of Proposition 13 out is part of the larger goal to dismantle it brick by brick.

This goal increases the flexible control of government over its citizens and offers unrestrained power to spend money where it is most politically

expedient and tax as a hedge of protection against overspending. A perfect example is the Governor's *MULTIBILLION DOLLAR* high-speed rail project. A project that only benefits high density urban environments yet construction is set to begin in Modesto and Bakersfield. Over 70% of Californians have said they don't want it. Yet the Governor insists on moving forward anyway? What is the motivation there?

It is because of poor financial decisions like this that we find our state budget in deep deficits year after year. I urge you to take a closer look. Our Constitution has been designed with inherent protections against penalizing minority interests such as rural residents but the legislature has blatantly dismissed the constitution and has passed a tax disguised as a fee. What comes next, a tax on home owners with pools or perhaps an 'urban custodial fee'? It seems when it comes to taxes, nothing is beyond the scope of imagination here in California. Remember that we are governed by consent and that government should not be our master nor impose taxes without our approval. We must focus on our nation's first principles designed to restrain political power by our government. Government was not meant to be our master and they can only govern by our consent. This works best when government's power is taken out of the hands of a disconnected capitol and evenly distributed to our local municipalities. We can make better choices and manage our money more efficiently locally. Accountability is real when the people making decisions for the welfare of our community are our neighbors.

I'll keep you posted...

